

Astor Selected for National "Reducing Adolescent Substance Abuse" Initiative

Astor Services' outpatient clinics and Astor's Adolescent Day Treatment programs have been selected, from a competitive, national group of provider applicants, to participate with 29 other agencies in the National Council for Behavioral Health's "Reducing Adolescent Substance Abuse Initiative."

As part of this learning and implementation initiative, funded by the Conrad Hilton Foundation, a core team of leaders from Astor's Hudson Valley Outpatient Clinics, the Highbridge Outpatient Clinic (in the Bronx), and the Adolescent and Middle School Day Treatment programs in the Hudson Valley, have begun participating in statewide work groups, national Web-based training, and social media communication initiatives.

This process will support implementation of SBIRT, an evidence-based practice for youth at risk for developing substance abuse disorders that provides screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment. SBIRT has been found to significantly reduce the development of full-blown substance abuse disorders in youth by catching substance use problems early, thereby reducing high risk behavior and costly health care utilization.

"SBIRT has proven to be highly effective, in pediatric and primary care, at keeping youth from heading into risky substance abuse. This exciting initiative will give our staff badly needed expertise and resources to keep youth in our care from risks," said Dr. Suzanne Button, Astor Services for Children & Families Assistant Executive Director, Quality & Clinical Outcomes.

At the end of the initiative, provider staff in participating Astor programs will have fine-tuned their ability to screen middle school and high school youth in their care, provide brief intervention when youth screen positively for substance use, and build strong referral relationships to specialty substance abuse treatment providers for youth who require more intensive intervention.

Since 1953, Astor Services for Children & Families (formerly The Astor Home for Children) has been providing behavioral and educational services in a caring environment where children and their families find strength, healing, hope and trust. Now serving more than 6,000 children and families annually in over 33 locations, Astor's current range of services in the Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties) and the Bronx include: Day Treatment Programs (for children ages 2.9 – 14); Residential Programs (for children ages 5 - 14 who have severe behavioral and mental health challenges); Early Childhood Programs (in Dutchess County, Astor operates The Early Head Start and Head Start programs, which are federal early childhood programs for low-income families); and Community-Based Behavioral Health and Prevention Services (outpatient mental health services).